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Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Letter dated 12 April 2002 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*

I am following instructions to convey to you the profound concern of the Government of the Republic of Cuba at the serious events occurring in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Government of Cuba expresses its strongest condemnation of the coup d'état which has deposed President Hugo Chávez, who was democratically elected by the Venezuelan people, during the constitutional exercise of his term of office with full international recognition.

President Chávez has been deposed through the illegal use of force, detained and held incommunicado, in a blatant violation of the Constitution of Venezuela, the norms of the rule of law and international and regional instruments and mechanisms.

The Cuban Government has learned with deep concern of the public statement by Dr. Isaías Rodríguez, Procurator-General of Venezuela, who categorically affirms that President Chávez has not resigned from his high office nor signed any document to that effect; nor has the Vice-President, who is to succeed him under the Constitution, been dismissed by the President. The Procurator-General has also affirmed that only the National Assembly of Venezuela is empowered to accept the resignation of the President of the Republic; it is even incumbent on the President of the Assembly to be third in line to succeed the President, as provided in the Venezuelan Constitution.

The Procurator-General has also denounced the arbitrary, illegal and unconstitutional nature of the coup d'état, which has cut off communication between his office and President Chávez, the constitutional President, whom the Procurator-General's Office regards as the sole legitimate leader of the country.

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The daughter of President Chávez has issued a dramatic appeal to the international community, having been able to speak by telephone with the President, and has indicated that the constitutional President has not resigned and that he is being held incommunicado by force.

For their part, a number of governors and military leaders have denounced the coup d'état.

In the meantime, the persons overthrowing the Government are involved in a dirty manipulation of information with the aim of preventing the international community and the Venezuelan people themselves from mobilizing.

The Government of Cuba calls for the broadest possible international mobilization and urgent and firm action by the United Nations to demand respect for the physical integrity of President Chávez and to ensure the restoration of constitutional order and the rule of law in Venezuela.

The Government of Cuba wishes to inform the United Nations, the international community and public opinion that the Cuban Embassy in Caracas is under violent siege, with the consent of those mounting the coup, by a mob which includes persons of Cuban origin residing in Venezuela, who are representatives of the extreme right wing and are in close contact with the terrorist organization known as the Cuban American National Foundation, located in Miami.

Cuban diplomatic personnel in Venezuela have instructions, and the strongest commitment, to defend the integrity of the Cuban Embassy in Caracas and to prevent the agitators from entering it, as provided in the conventions on diplomatic relations and other binding international instruments, even at the cost of their own lives.

The Government of Cuba holds those staging the coup and usurping constitutional power in Venezuela responsible for what may happen to the Cuban Embassy and to the physical integrity and security of the Cuban diplomats.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated urgently as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Orlando **Regueijo Gual**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.